

Dana Point Harbor Oversight Advisory Committee

Wednesday, August 6, 2025

MINUTES

Robert Langan, DPHOAC Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:12 p.m. Committee members not in attendance included; Colin Harris, Darcie Harris, Wendy Leavell, Mike Frost, John Fellner and Shala O'Keefe. Donna Kalez sat in for Ms. O'Keefe, and John Murray sat in for Mr. Fellner.

PRESENTATIONS/UPDATES:

-County of Orange CEO Real Estate Update: Christian Gagne, the Dana Point Harbor Oversight Manager for the County of Orange advised the Committee that the new parking structure was granted a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy until final details are completed and the final permit is issued, which was estimated to be received in September. This allowed the garage to open and operate for the 4th of July festivities in the harbor. He also advised the Committee that the Commercial Core's next phase (Phase 3) could conceivably begin demolition and construction provided all lease compliance requirements are met with an estimated start of the end of September. In addition, Phase 9A of the Marina is underway near the commercial fishing docks and the Harbor Patrol office. Mr. Gagne reported that conversations with DPHP and the County are continuing to assess potential locations for the White Seabass grow pens in light of the pending construction at their current location. The Committee was advised that the EIR appeal regarding the proposed harbor hotel projects has been withdrawn, allowing the projects to move to the next planning phase. However, the California Coastal Commission may raise concerns about the room rates proposed by the DPHP and the approved CDP.

Mr. Gagne then advised the Committee that the County of Orange CEO Real Estate team is actively developing license agreement templates to be used with the OCSEC user groups as the new space plan is implemented. An RFP has been issued for the complete redesign and construction of the OCSEC with proposals due by the end of the year. The effort to mitigate the impact of sea lions in the harbor is moving forward, with a planned visit to Oceanside Harbor to study their efforts and the planned use of drone-based "thermal imaging" in Dana Point Harbor to locate where the sea lions are congregating, especially during the evening hours.

Mr. Gagne then provided the Committee with the Q&A follow up related to the Laurain & Associates Dana Point Harbor Market Rate Study, originally presented at the June DPHOAC meeting. The document included responses to questions submitted by the Committee and addressed by Mr. Laurain. It will be posted on the Fifth District website along with the release of the Appraisal Report.

In addition, Alyssa Napuri shared a report from the County of Orange Data Analytics team's statistician, which summarized the slip rate information from the Laurain & Associates' study using unweighted averages. Ms. Napuri also advised the Committee that, in an effort to validate the accuracy of the Marina at Dana Point waitlist, staff from Vice Chair Foley's office, had attempted to contact all of the individuals on the current waitlist, approximately 1,980. They successfully contacted approximately 30% of those on the list, and among those reached, 90% indicated that they would immediately accept a slip at the current slip rates if offered.

The Marina at Dana Point also advised the Supervisor's office that, as of June, 2,115 slips out of the 2,169 total slips currently available were occupied. Vacancies, per the Marina office, were due to normal turnover within the harbor as well as slips being temporarily held for relocation purposes during the ongoing marina construction.

After discussion of the Q&A, the statistician's analysis, and Ms. Napuri's waitlist survey report, Vice Chair Foley asked the committee if the Laurain study should be accepted as written. In response, several Committee members took exception to the study, citing some anomalies in the statistical analysis and the lack of "local market" and demographic considerations in the study that warranted further review. There was also concern that the Committee had not had sufficient time to evaluate the responses from Mr. Laurain. Vice Chair Foley was also asked if the study, that recommends rates well above the current rates charged in the marina, would provide DPHP a "carte blanche" capability with regard to future slip rates. Kelly Rinderknecht, representing the Marina at Dana Point, indicated that DPHP do not have any intent to raise rates above the 5-year plan released in 2024. After some additional discussion, a motion was made and seconded by the Committee to delay a decision on the acceptance of the study until the next meeting so that the study and the statistical analysis provided by the County could be reviewed further.

-Orange County Supervisor Foley Update: Vice Chair Foley advised the Committee that the bi-weekly calls between DPHP and the County continue as scheduled. She also reported that the proposal to relocate the Outrigger Club to the "Baby Beach" location, identified by the County as the best solution, will go before the Dana Point Planning Commission on August 25th. Vice Chair Foley noted that some Planning Commission members expressed concern that the proposed facility might primarily benefit a private entity. In response to follow-up questions about the Club's membership and fees, it was clarified that the club is open to any member of the public who can demonstrate basic swimming and strength skills, with annual membership available to all. Fees collected are used to operate the club and cover entry fees to various competitions throughout the year. Vice Chair Foley asked that the club to be prepared to present their operating protocol and membership details at the upcoming Planning Commission in August.

-County of Orange Parks Update: Michael Wilson advised the Committee that the OCSEC boathouse roof project is scheduled to commence around September 8th and is expected to take about 3 weeks. He indicated that this work was needed at the beginning of OCSEC's interim improvements phase to protect any subsequent interior improvements planned. Additionally, he indicated that the larger proposed design and master planning effort of the OCSEC facility is underway through an RFP selection process, and is expected to be ongoing over the next few years. He explained the extensive planning process would include several options for flexibility including concept designs that would include conforming with the existing Coastal Development Permit (CDP) and non-conforming options that continue to utilize the existing footprint, such as renovation, or a CDP conforming or non-conforming complete tear down. Each option will require multiple layers of review, contributing to a multi-year timeline. Lastly, he advised the Committee that the new OCSEC space utilization plan would start moving forward in September after the busy summer season. He also advised the committee that the OCSEC dock design is ongoing, with a depth survey recently completed as part of the design process and, anticipated construction to begin in Spring 2026, pending permit and design approvals.

-Committee Member/Additional Updates:

Diane Wenzel, DPHOAC member, recommended that the OC Parks department develop and provide the OCSEC users an “emergency” action plan that includes emergency procedures and contact information in light of the recent fire disasters in the Los Angeles area.

Mr. Langan adjourned the meeting at 6:48 p.m. after a motion, a second and a committee vote for the adjournment passed. The next meeting is scheduled for 8/3/25.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. NEW - Further review and report by the Committee of the Laurain & Assoc. Dana Point Harbor Market Study.
2. OPEN - Relocation of the White Sea Bass grow pens.